DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 157 868 SP 012 494

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TITLE Outdoor Education Program.
INSTITUTION Chadron State Coll., Nebr.
PUB DATE Oct 77
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperating Teachers; Curriculum Design; Education Majors; Environmental Education; Field Experience Programs; Humanistic Education; Human Living; Interdisciplinary Approach; *Outdoor Education; *Preservice Education; *Program Descriptions

ABSTRACT

This program involves an integrated interdisciplinary approach to teacher education which is centered around the natural laboratory of the out-of-doors. The program involves students, both in undergraduate and graduate courses, and practicing teachers in outdoor education workshops. The entire school curriculum is taken out-of-doors in a seven-day wilderness trip for sixth grade students. All elements of the curriculum are related to natural phenomena, and teachers learn new techniques of utilizing nature to enhance the learning processes of their students. (JD)

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ED157868

NOV 2 1 1977

OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Presented to the

American Association of Colleges

for Teacher Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Chadron State College

Chadron, Nebraska

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Chadron State College

Outdoor Education Program

Summary

In an effort to make college learning and public school teaching more relevant, Chadron State College has developed an integrated inter-disciplinary approach to teacher education which is centered around the natural laboratory of the out-of-doors. The program involves students, both in undergraduate and graduate courses, and practicing teachers in outdoor education workshops. The program includes pre-student teaching experiences, achieved by working with the sixth graders from 16 school districts, in three-day camps where the entire school curriculum is take out-of-doors. The program includes a seven-day wilderness trip for practicing teachers and college students to the wilderness of Wyoming, where teachers learn new techniques of utilizing nature to enhance the learning process. Interest in the outdoor education programs and their support are evidenced by a recent donation of a 50-acre natural history preserve adjacent to the campus and the donation of a 281-acre outdoor learning center 18 miles south of the campus. Through the present programs and the possibilities available through the addition of the new areas for instruction, we have found that the informal teaching techniques utilized in outdoor teaching offers students and practicing teachers opportunities to develop more humanistic teaching techniques.

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PREFACE

In 1972, Dr. Cecil E. Stanley, Commissioner of Nebraska State Education Department, wrote the following piece in support of outdoor education:

Modern man lives in a rapidly expanding and changing society which grows more and more complex each year. The continual increase in technology, automation, and urbanization, however, have presented man with some very perplexing problems which must be solved: Has man, in his efforts to expand technology, begun to destroy out planet's ecology, thus his own existance? If so, what can be done to provide a technology-ecology balance to insure man's continued existance?

Man's expanded technology and automation has also provided him with greatly increased amounts of leisure time. Much of this time is being spent in the solitude of the out-of-doors where he can communicate with nature, away from the worries and tensions of everyday living.

Modern man has forgotten, however, how to truly appreciate the natural surrounding of the wilderness. He has become a polluter and destroyer of our ecological process. His presence in the wilderness is easily recognizable by the trail of litter he leaves behind, and the scars he creates through the carelessness of campfires. Man pollutes rivers, streams, and lakes; and destroys the habitat of countless wild-life, which are becoming more and more in danger of extinction.

Therefore, if man and society is to change, educational efforts must focus upon these specific problems. Our nation's educational institutions, both elementary/secondary and college/university, must set priorities, and begin to develop programs which will assist in the continued survival of mankind.

-----This becomes more true with each passing year!

I. DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

A. Description of Chadron State College Outdoor Education Program

1. Early Developmental Efforts

Chadron State College, located in the northwest corner of Nebraska, has been known as the "Pioneering College of Nebraska." Innovation and change in teacher preparation has long been a byword of the college.

Chadron State College's preliminary efforts in their overall Outdoor Education Project began in the early 1960's, with the establishment of an undergraduate offering in Outdoor Education through the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

In an effort to make the instruction more meaningful and relevant to the college students, the local school system and parochial schools were approached with the idea of involving their sixth grade students in an outdoor education experience. The college students and classroom teachers worked cooperatively to develop a three-day education experience. Special emphasis was placed upon not making the experience just a camping or field trip, but rather to take the entire school curriculum out-of-doors.

The favorable reactions of the sixth graders, their teachers and the college students were overwhelming, and eventually led to one of Chadron State College's basic beliefs in teacher education . . . . "Every student should be afforded the opportunity of living and learning in the out-of-doors."

2. Overall Outdoor Education Offerings

From the early Outdoor Education efforts and the resulting spark of interest displayed by all involved, the Chadron State College Outdoor Education Project has evolved to a much broader and more

interdisciplinary approach. The following describes the present overall offerings which encompass the Chadron State College Outdoor Education Project.

a. An undergraduate course in outdoor education designed to acquaint prospective teachers with the concepts of outdoor education. Developing an understanding of the history and scope of outdoor education; acceptance of outdoor education as a valuable method of learning, and recognition of the important contributions made to education of youth.

b. Sixth grade outdoor education experience for elementary schools. A function of the undergraduate outdoor education class.

c. Experiences in outdoor education is a graduate course which is intended to provide unique experiences for practicing teachers and prospective teachers, and is based around the need for man to learn new techniques of cooperating with nature.

d. State-wide curriculum guidelines (published in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Education).

e. Camp Norwesca--Chadron State College Field Laboratory.

f. Harold and LaVerne Thompson Natural History preserve. This is a 50-acre tract that is situated on the southwestern corner of the campus and is used for environmental studies and experiences.

g. Pepper Creek Outdoor Learning Center--newly acquired land for the expansion of the outdoor education program.

3. Detailed description of Chadron State College Outdoor Education Program

a. HPER 436 Outdoor Education

The purpose of this course is to acquaint the students with the values

of outdoor education, to develop a common understanding of the means available for education in and for the out-of-doors, and to develop knowledge and skills through direct experiences for teaching in and for the out-of-doors.

The classroom portion of the HPER 436 class consists of four separate units. The first deals with the development of outdoor education and its relationship to the learning process. The second unit deals with the topic of the role of outdoor education in the schools and colleges. Unit three covers the outdoor education program as a function of the parks, recreational, governmental and voluntary agencies. The last unit covers the leadership preparation and planning for outdoor education laboratory experiences.

b. Sixth Grade Outdoor Education Experience

1. School systems involved:

The sixth grade outdoor education experience has grown from the original two systems, Chadron Public Schools and Assumption Parochial School, to a total of 16 school systems:

Bridgeport; Chadron; Crawford; Rushville; Hay Springs; Harrison; Hemingford; Gering; Sidney; Mitchell; Valentine; Broadwater; Morrill; Gordon; Goshen Hole, Wyoming; Torrington, Wyoming.

The number of students has grown from the original 90 students to over 1,200 for the 1976-1977 campus.

2. Pre-camp In-service:

In the spring of each year those teachers from the 16 schools who will be involved in the next school year's outdoor laboratory attend a two day workshop.

The teachers are given ideas of how to plan for and what types of

units to be teaching when their individual classes come to Camp Norwesca.

3. Equipment, Supplies, and Transportation:

All equipment and supplies for use in class work and afterstudy hours are furnished by the participating schools and Chadron State College.

Transportation of the students to and from the outdoor experience area is provided by each school.

4. Housing:

Housing is provided for by utilizing the housing units at Camp Norwesca. The large, centrally located lodge with cooking facilities serves as the dining hall. The building also serves as a classroom in case of inclement weather.

With the acquisition of Pepper Creek land, future plans call for the construction of a combination lodge, dormitory and dining room-kitchen complex to accommodate 120 campers.

5. Parental Permission, Insurance:

Parental permission is required of all students who participate. An on going public relations program keeps parents informed and up-to-date on the outing plans. To avoid unnecessary congestion and the disruption of meaningful learning experiences, parents are not encouraged to visit the area during the outing.

All teachers and college personnel are covered by their respective school insurance policies, as the outdoor education program is considered to be a part of the regular school routine. Accident coverage is provided to students through a special policy initiated with the American Income Life Company of Indianapolis, Indiana.

The entire three-day outing is well supervised by the teachers and

the college outdoor education class members on the basis of a 24-hour day.

6. Health and Safety Precautions:

Services of a school nurse are available 24 hours a day. Each student completes a health form and any medical attention indicated is provided by the school nurse. The nurse, along with the teachers and resource persons, assume the extra burden without special compensation.

7. Activities:

Typical class activities include a wide variety of subject-matter areas. Specific content is determined cooperatively by the students and teachers, much depending upon the time and space available. The teacher is not expected to be an expert on the outdoors, but is expected to participate in all of the activities. The resource persons and the college students assist in their major areas of interest.

8. Subject Matter Areas:

(a) Science. The emphasis in the area of science is to help students place in the proper perspective, the great variety of materials in the outdoors.

(b) Conservation. Activities include soil study, prevention of soil erosion planning, and providing wildlife cover.

(c) Social Science. Teacher and resource persons utilize the natural environment to explain the "how" of history, geography, and political science.

(d) Language Arts. Classes in art and music attempt to capture the essence of beauty, color, form, and imagery through interpreting and re-creating some of the mysteries of nature.

(e) Physical Education. Education for the outdoors involves the teaching skills that allow participation by all.

(1) Shooting -- every student is given the opportunity to fire a gun, after he has attended sessions on the proper use and safe method of handling firearms, state game laws, and reasons for their enforcement.

(2) Casting and angling -- skills of fishing are explained to all students, involving the use of the rod and reel. Essential skills of angling are taught by resource persons.

(3) Archery -- allows students to learn to shoot the proper and safe way.

(4) Boating -- students are exposed to the skill of rowing a boat and methods of self-rescue and aiding other victims of aquatic accidents.

(5) Orienteering -- a map and compass course helps students gain confidence by fending for themselves in the woods.

c. Wilderness Trip

The HPER 537/437 class is a graduate offering which is also available to undergraduate students who have 90 or more hours of credit. The course is a 2½ week summer workshop which includes nine days spent in the Wind River Mountains of Central Wyoming.

The thesis of the course is that a meaningful outdoor education program for teachers must include experiences in close contact with nature, in a wilderness setting unobstructed by civilization. Learning to live off the land in a survival training course, getting to "feel" nature, and observing the wonders of the outdoors do much to broaden the educational background of would-be teachers utilizing outdoor education concepts.

Instructors for the class are drawn from the areas of astronomy,

biology, geology, Indian history, and physical education. Resource persons include: professors from CSC, Casper College, Smithsonian Institute and qualified volunteers in their specialty.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

The first half day consists of "getting ready" activities. Registering for class, meeting with class, meeting with class instructors and resource persons for an overview of the planned activities, and packing and loading equipment and supplies for the nine days of "roughing" it are included.

On the second day the group proceeds to Wyoming and the base camp. Fishing licenses and reservation permit for the seven days in the wilderness are obtained. Tents are staked out, and a steak fry is enjoyed. On the first night in base camp, group sessions on mountain photography and a campfire sing begin the outdoor education instruction.

The morning of the third day is spent in preparing for the 13 mile ride into the wilderness. Learning how to bridle and saddle the horse, practice in tying the "diamond hitch," learning to pack equipment in a "panier" on the horse, and getting the feel of riding, round out the morning activities.

The afternoon is spent in learning sessions. The topics are map reading and practical work in orienteering. After the evening meals, sessions in mountain man history and star study are conducted.

Daybreak of the fourth day marks the departure for the ride into the wilderness. Climbing from an altitude of 9,100 feet at base camp, to an altitude of 10,300 feet where tents are pitched and the campsite is organized into a living unit.

The fifth through the twelfth days in the wilderness are filled with a variety of outdoor learning experiences. Instructors conduct sessions

in astronomy, biology, geology, and Indian history. Study in a natural setting is highly motivating as opportunities to see, touch, and appreciate are experienced. Suddenly there is relevancy to all learning. Resource persons reveal new insights and lead discussions in a wide variety of topic areas.

A 48-hour survival course, in which the group learns to "live off of the land," and a session in mountaineering, in which they learn to rappel a mountainside, serve as examples of the many experiences offered.

On the thirteenth day camp is broken. Leaving the wilderness campsite is both an anticipated and yet saddening event. Left behind are experiences of enjoyment, hard work, and the closeness of nature. A final powwow at the base camp with the passing of the peace pipe completes the outdoor experience.

After a day's return trip from the Wyoming wilderness area, the group assembles at the college for a complete evaluation of the program. Experiences are relived, and plans to improve the next workshop are discussed.

BOOK PUBLISHED:

As a result of the mountain trips, Mr. Mack Peyton, Associate Professor, HPER, Chadron State College collaborated with Mr. Jack Romanek, Casper College, Wyoming to publish through the A. G. Hallden Publishing Co., Indiana, Pennsylvania, a book entitled "Manual for Modern Day Mountain Man." The two authors put into written words the responses of the many participants of the wilderness trips and added ideas and suggestions to make such a trip enjoyable, educationally worthwhile, and physically rewarding.

d. State-wide Curriculum Guidelines

Mr. Mack Peyton, Associate Professor, HPER, Chadron State College, and Mr. Roy Gray, Post Administrative Consultant, HPER, Nebraska Department of Education collaborated to develop a Nebraska Department of Education publication, "Experiences in Outdoor Education." The Guidelines have been distributed to all Nebraska Schools and Departments of Education throughout the nation.

e. Camp Norwesca--Chadron State College Field Laboratory

In 1970, the Chadron State College Foundation leased Camp Norwesca from the Nebraska United Methodist Churches for utilization by the college for a field campus.

Camp Norwesca is located 12 miles south of Chadron. The camp encompasses 40 acres in the heart of the Pine Ridge. It is bounded on the north by Chadron State Park and on the south and west by the Nebraska National Forest. Included are a lodge that has kitchen, dining and recreation facilities, a caretakers residence and ten summer cabins with an adult capacity of ten per cabin.

CSC President, Dr. Edwin C. Nelson, in announcing the action said, "This will provide a range of opportunities for enriching the curricular and the non-curricular activities of the college and it will allow opportunities for groups from school and communities in the area to appreciate outdoor living and camping experiences."

The camp's first major use was the college's growing outdoor education program which involves college students, faculty, and sixth graders from area schools. The camp also is used by college organizations for meetings and social activities and is available for rent to non-college organizations.

Several biology courses, particularly those involving nature studies find the camp very useful. The camp provides the college with an excellent laboratory for learning experiences in the outdoors, as well as a place for healthful and recreational exercises.

Camp Norwesca is utilized for many of the Chadron State College outdoor education project activities.

(1) outdoor laboratory for HPER 436

(2) sixth grade Outdoor Education Experiences

(3) earth science laboratory

(4) Employment Opportunities Act--to provide employment for persons in this area of low employment.

f. The Thompson Natural History Preserve

The Preserve is a natural area with great potential for environmental studies because species discussed in various biology, agriculture, etc., classes are demonstrated in their particular plant community settings in very close proximity to the laboratory. The Preserve has the quality of some of the best representation of the diversity of plant life in the Pine Ridge. It serves as an outstanding baseline of the area for comparative studies with economically used, but otherwise similar, vegetation.

g. Pepper Creek Outdoor Learning Center

Chadron State College has been given 281 acres by Dr. and Mrs. William E. Colwell of Chadron to be used in the college's outdoor education program. The property is 18 miles south of Chadron on the east side of Highway 385.

The gift will enable Chadron State to expand the outdoor education program it now conducts at Camp Norwesca. A non-profit corporation will be formed to hold the Colwell gift for development. Several buildings

are proposed to provide year-around living accommodations.

4. Future Plans for the Chadron State College Outdoor Education Program

a. Adhering to their traditional motto as Nebraska's "Pioneering College" and committed to the concept that "nothing is as permanent as change," Chadron State College continually strives to improve upon their educational programs. Outdoor Education is not an exception to that concept.

b. Plans are underway to make the current undergraduate and graduate offerings in the physical education and science areas into interdisciplinary offerings for the majority of the teacher training areas. While the course numbers will remain the same, an appropriate title to correspond to the student's major preparation area will be instigated. Eventually these courses will be listed under the Education Division as cross-disciplinary offerings.

c. The recent addition of the Pepper Creek Outdoor Learning Center will enable Chadron State College to develop a national reputation in outdoor education. Plans are underway to construct a workshop this spring, and other buildings will be added in the future. Initial work on roadways, pathways, and outpost teaching-learning stations will enable CSC to utilize the entire acreage while awaiting the facilities construction.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

A. General Goals of the Chadron State College Outdoor Education Program

As is the case with the various subject fields included in the total school curriculum, the aims and objectives of an outdoor education program should be clearly stated and understood. Generally, the first guiding principles to be adhered to are:

1. The primary goal of an outdoor education program should be concerned with the total growth of the students.

2. Experiences in the outdoors should be planned to the end that desirable changes in student behavior will be produced.

B. General Objectives of Outdoor Education

1. The very basic objective of the CSC Outdoor Education Project is to attempt to combine all educational disciplines into a cooperative teaching effort to make learning more exciting and relevant to both students and teachers.

2. In recognizing the vast learning potential of a well-planned and well-conducted outdoor education program, the following objectives illustrate the broad range of educational contributions which students can enjoy through participation in such a program:

a. to reinforce the principles of natural science, conservation, social sciences, language arts and physical education.

b. to reinforce citizenship through allowing students to live and share together, accept responsibilities, and learn through group planning.

c. to reinforce the worthy use of leisure time through outdoor experiences of health and physical education.

d. to reinforce an appreciation of all living things in the outdoors.

e. to provide a friendly and informal atmosphere of learning through fellowship and "fun experiences."

C. Concepts of Outdoor Education

The plan of action of an outdoor education program infringes upon traditional class scheduling practices. The amounts of time involved cannot be equated to certain required number of minutes or credits; nor is the ordinary school routine followed. The entire outdoor education program is based on the following education concepts.

a. providing directed learning through planning, executing, and evaluating activities within the program.

b. motivating learning by appealing to the interests of the students.

c. providing for individual differences by allowing each student to express initiative, show ability, and achieve some degree of status.

d. providing a wide range of satisfying experiences for uniting all in the practice of democracy.

D. Examples of Specific Objectives

The overall CSC outdoor education program involves several phases. The following specific objectives, therefore, have been randomly selected from several of the individual phases. Measurement of student programs is undertaken only after students have been exposed to: instruction, both formal and informal, via lectures, discussions, observations, actual practice and/or field experience.

(a) Sixth Grade Outdoor Education Project

(1) Given ten examples of plant life found in the area, the student shall correctly identify 8 of the 10 plants.

(2) The student shall be able to discuss at least three historical facts relating to the Indian culture of the area.

(3) Given a paper sack with the proper metal holder, two strips of bacon and one egg, the student shall be able to successfully cook his breakfast over an open campfire without burning the sack.

(4) The student shall be able to correctly identify the calls of at least two birds found in the area.

(b) Experiences in Outdoor Education

(1) Every student will be given the opportunity to increase his power of observation by identifying countryside features gleaned from a road log.

(2) Setting up and striking of the camps are experienced by all as a challenge for those who have never been involved.

(3) Each student has to saddle and bridle a horse for a ride into the wilderness. (A first for many.)

(4) Lively contact with the wonders of nature are realities for every participant as each one is involved with extramural activities.

(5) On-site study is provided for all to identify and understand the curiosity inherent in unknown areas.

(6) Solutions are provided for each student as social adjustments are made, cultural learning enhanced, and personality development edges forth.

III. PERSONNEL INVOLVED

A. Sixth Grade Camp

1. Mr. Mack Peyton, Director and Co-ordinator
2. Students from the HPER 436 undergraduate Outdoor Education Class
3. The sixth grade classroom teachers from the participating schools
4. Mrs. Mable Poppe--registered nurse
5. Resource People -

Dr. James Hanson, Smithonian Institute - Washington, D.C.
Mr. Vance Nelson, Historian, Ft. Robinson State Museum
Mr. Don Berlie, noted outdoorsman in surrounding area
Mr. Carl Lukkes, Division of Science - CSC
Mr. James Hanson, Director, Museum of the Fur Trade, Chadron
Mr. Paul Manley, State Patrol, Scottsbluff
Mr. Norm Martin, Music and Archery, Chadron
Dr. Larry Agenbroad, Earth Science, CSC
Ms. Doris Gates, Biology & Ornithology
Mrs. Mary Peyton, Petrology, Chadron
Mr. Robert Tice, U.S. Forest Service, Regional Officer, Chadron
Mr. Elmer Sternhagen, Trapper, Chadron

B. Camp Norwesca

1. Camp Norwesca Committee*

Mr. Mack Peyton, Chairman, HPER
Dr. Harry Holmberg, Division of Fine Arts
Mr. Ross Armstrong, Alumni Association
Mr. Dick Tibbits, Student Life
Dr. James Bentley, Vice President of Administrative Affairs
Ms. Doris Gates, Biologist, CSC
Mr. Don Duncan, Campus Center Director - CSC

*The Camp Norwesca Committee is a committee which administers the camp for the Chadron State College Foundation who leases the camp from the Methodist Church.

C. Experiences in Outdoor Education - HPER 537/437

1. Mr. Ron tenBensel, Director
2. Mr. Mack Peyton, Co-Director
   Mr. Jack Romanek, Co-Director

3. Resource Personnel
   Mr. Floyd Kelly, Casper College, Mountaineering
   Mr. Vern Mills, Biologist
   Dr. James Hanson, Smithonian Institute, Washington, D.C.
   Mr. James McCafferty, Astronomy, CSC
   Dr. Noel Gray, Fine Arts, CSC
   Mr. Larry Marlow, NOLS, Lander, Wyoming
   Dr. Doug Brown, Humanities, CSC
   Mrs. Mary Peyton, Earth Science, Chadron

IV. BUDGET

The Outdoor Education Program at Chadron State College does not receive any special budgeting. Most of the expenses for the various programs are met by participant fees. The instruction is part of the college faculty members regular load and the many involved resource people donate their time and efforts.

1. Sixth Grade Camp

   The initial cost was $6.50 per pupil in 1966. With the acquisition of Camp Norwesca, adding insurance coverage, and providing a use fee to the Methodist Church, plus the inflation factor the costs have risen to $11.00 per pupil. No monies are provided as compensation for the many resource people who are involved in the teaching-learning in the outdoors. Most of the sixth grades attending the camps have money raising projects in their schools to defray the fee.

2. Camp Norwesca

   The CSC Foundation assumed the insurance cost for the Camp amounting to $1,300 per year. The College Committee assumed the responsibility for maintenance and immediate repairs. Capital outlay expenses are covered jointly by the Norwesca Committee and the Methodist Church. The caretaker is provided housing and utilities for overseeing the camp, maintaining the road, and checking groups in and out during the winter months. Full-time personnel are hired for peak time of the year.

3. Wilderness Trip

   Each participant pays $125.00 for the trips. Included in this fee are the housing and feeding while on campus, transportation to and from the wilderness site, food while at the wilderness site, food while in the wilderness, guide and wrangler service, and horse use fee for riding into the wilderness area and transferring of personal and camp gear into and out of the wilderness. Credit hours for the course cost according to the rate established by the College.

4. Pepper Creek Outdoor Learning Center

Initially in-service workshops can be held for on-site study. The 6th Graders Laboratory School program can be conducted on a day basis with plans to expand to total usage within three years. Work projects of a learning nature. Reconstruction of a western town, sod hut, and developing that pioneer spirit. Experiential learning through adventures in the outdoors.

V. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A. Overview of Evaluation Methodology

1. To better facilitate a more comprehensive evaluation of the overall Outdoor Education Program, Chadron State College has utilized the following evaluative methodology.

a. On-the-site observation by State Department of Education Personnel of the following program phases:

(1) sixth grade outdoor education experiences

(2) HPER 537--Experiences in Outdoor Education

b. Tabulation of surveys, both written and personal interviews, including follow-up studies of sixth grade program conducted at two and four-year intervals.

B. Description of Evaluative Methodology

1. On-the-site observations by State Department of Education Personnel

a. Sixth grade outdoor education experience

On-the-site observations by State Department of Education personnel have been made on at least one occasion per year since the beginning of the program.

b. HPER 537/437--Experiences in Outdoor Education

(1) The 1971 two-week summer course received on-the-site observation and evaluation by a evaluation team composed of the Chairman of Health, Physical Education and Recreation,

Chadron State College, and the State Department of Education Consultant for Physical Education and Health.

(2) A written report of the evaluation teams observations and personal interviews with class members was presented to the college administration in September of 1971.

(3) Another on-site evaluation team has been scheduled for the summer of 1978.

2. Tabulation of Surveys

a. Sixth Grade Program

(1) Subjective and objective evaluation techniques were utilized at the completion of each of the separate sessions of the Chadron State College Outdoor Education program.

At the conclusion of the camp the students and the teachers asked to express their reactions to the camp, and each time very positive responses were given.

During the camps, periodic administrative visits were performed and each time the students and teachers were involved in an enthusiastic learning experience.

(2) A follow-up study (a 76 question questionnaire) was given to the 63 Chadron students still in Chadron who had participated in the initial camp of 1967. August, 1971 was the date of the study.

b. Wilderness Trip

At the conclusion of each trip, each of the participants in HPER 537/437, Experience in Outdoor Education course, was asked to fill out an evaluation sheet after returning from the trip. They, probably more than anything else, proved the worth of the course.

Most of those involved said they felt one of the most important things they learned was how to enjoy the outdoors. Several also mentioned that their abilities to work with others were strengthened, and that they learned that interdependence among their fellow men was extremely important.

VI. HOW THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

A. Overview

1. The Chadron State College Outdoor Education Project operates under two very basic educational concepts.

a. Learning takes place more efficiently and effectively if the subject matter content is made more relevant to the student. Relevancy is easily facilitated in outdoor experiences where students are afforded opportunities to "see, touch, smell and hear."

b. A humanistic teaching approach which allows for a positive student self-concept facilitates learning. The more informal teaching techniques dictated by the outdoors contribute to this humanistic approach.

B. Specific Contributions to Teacher Education

1. Provides students and practicing teachers with opportunities to discover how to use the out-of-doors as a learning laboratory.

2. Allows students and practicing teachers to experience a cooperative and interdisciplinary teaching approach.

3. Offers students and practicing teachers opportunities to discover and capitalize on the "magic teaching moments" which are facilitated through outdoor teaching.

4. The informal teaching techniques utilized in outdoor teaching offers students and practicing teachers opportunities to develop teaching techniques.

5. The sixth grade program offers prospective teachers with pre-student teaching experiences involving children, giving them a greater understanding of the children with which they will be working.

6. The sixth grade program offers prospective teachers the opportunity to work closely with an experienced teacher in planning and preparing educational experiences for children.

7. The graduate class involves a concentrated field experience where students live in close contact 24 hours per day. This close personal contact, where all must share, provides countless opportunities for the students to reevaluate their personal value systems, and their attitudes, understanding, and compassions for others. The opportunities for sharing ideas help to develop better teaching techniques.

8. The variety of experiences made possible by the flexibility of instruction in the out-of-doors makes each day an enjoyable experience for both teacher and student. The opportunity to have the days schedule interspersed with lecture and discussion periods, excursions into the field for on-site study, and small group discussions has made each student feel like they are contributing to the education of their fellow student. The changing daily schedule has proven to students that unequal subjects do not need equal time each day.